Doctrine of Peace: an Islamic Perspective; an Analysis of the Hindrances in Peace Making Process

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Abstract:

The present day global community is confronted with several challenges, absence of peace being the biggest one. The UNO and other regional organizations strive hard to achieve this goal. Unfortunately the world is far from achieving the goal of ensuring peace. It is also a fact that in most cases the Muslim world is in turmoil and it is involved or has been involved in one way or another. In order to find out the real causes of unrest, it is imperative to analyze the situation from academic, political, economic and social aspects. This article deals with first aspect i.e. the academic. It has three parts, in the first part importance of peace has been elaborated in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. In the second part, importance of peace treaties of the Prophet (PBUH), and one of His successors Umar, the second Caliph, has been brought in to focus. The issue that the foreign policy of Islamic State is based on perpetual peace has been discussed in this part. While in the third part those obstacles have been discussed which have caused to damage the peace process in the world.

Introduction:

Peace is one of the fundamental values of Islam. It carries a central position in the Islamic teachings. In fact it is the crux of all Islamic injunctions which state that one should not create problems for others in any form, neither by words, nor by actions and even nor by gestures.

Peace in Islam is reflected in the word Islam itself.: In Arabic , it is triliteral with salam, the word for peace, indicating that making peace is one of the essential ideas of the religion. A Muslim, according to the Qur'an, is he who has made peace through complete submission to God and doing good for his fellow man.[1]

The conditions conducive to the state of peace are primarily spiritual and have larger implications for the cosmos, the individual, and society. Ibrahim Kalin opines that three premise are directly relevant to this discussion.

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The first pertains to peace as a divine name (*al-salam.*[2]). The Qur'anic concept of God is founded upon a robust monotheism, and God's transcendence (*tanzih)* is emphasized in both the canonical sources and the intellectual tradition. To this absolutely one and transcendent God belong " all the beautiful names" [3], that is the names of beauty , (*Jamal),* majesty (*Jalal*, and perfection (*Kamal).* These names prevent God from becoming an utterly unbearable and wholly other deity. Devine names represent God's face turned toward the world and are the vessels to fining God in and through His creation. The names of beauty precedence over the names of majesty because God says that ' My mercy has encompassed everything'[4] and " God has written mercy upon Himself.[5]"

The second premise is related to what traditional philosophy calls the great chain of being (da'irat al-wujud). In the cosmic scale of things, the universe is the best of all possible worlds because , first, it is actual, which implies completion and plenitude over potentiality, and second, its built-in order derives its sustenance from the creator. The natural world is in a constant state of peace because, according to the Qur'an, it is muslim(small m) in that it surrenders (*taslim*) itself to the will of God and, thus, rises above all tension and discord.[6] In its normative depiction of natural phenomena, the Qur'an talks about stars and trees as " prostrating before God"[7] and says that " all that is in the heavens and earth extols His glory" .[8]By acknowledging God's unity and praising His name, man joins the natural world in a substantive way---understanding the essential link between the anthropos and the cosmos in what has been called the anthropocosmic vision.

The third premise pertains to man's natural state and his place within the larger context of existence. Though the Qur'an occasionally describes the fallen nature of man in gruesome terms, presenting him as weak, forgetful, treacherous, hasty, ignorant, ungrateful, hostile, and egotistic[9], these qualities are eventually considered deviations from man's essential nature (*fitrah);* he has been created in the most beautiful form (*ahsan taqwim)*[10], both physically and spiritually. This metaphysical optimism defines human being as God's vicegerent on earth (*khalifat Allah fi'l-ard*), as the Qur'an says, or, to use a metaphor from Christianity, as the pontifex, the bridge between heaven and earth. The *fitrah,*[11]the primordial nature from which God has created all humanity, is essentially a moral and spiritual substance drawn to good and God-consciousness (*taqwa*). Its imperfections and excessiveness[12] are accidental qualities to be subsumed under the soul's struggle to do good (*al-birr*), through which it transcends its subliminal desires by its intelligence and moral will."[13]

Importance of Peace:

Peace as a substantive and positive concept entails the presence of certain conditions that make it an enduring state of harmony, integrity, contentment, equilibrium, repose, and moderation. This can be contrasted with negative peace, which denotes the absence of conflict and discord. Even as negative peace is indispensable to prevent communal violence, border disputes, or international conflicts, substantive-positive peace calls for a comprehensive

outlook to address the deeper causes of conflict, hate, strife, destruction, brutality, and violence. .[14]

Peace-related values that are central to the Qur'an, and thus to Islam, include love, kindness, benevolence, wisdom, knowledge, service, social empowerment, universality, dignity, the sacredness of human life, equality, individual responsibility, accountability, patience, collaboration and solidarity, inclusion and participation, and unity in diversity, among others.[15]

The centrality of peace is reflected in Muslim's daily greetings to each other, *as salam o alaikum*, which translates to' peace be on you. In Islam, peace is a state of physical, mental, spiritual, political, and social harmony-living at peace with God through submission to Him, and with fellow human beings by avoiding mischief on earth. Peace also has social and personal dimensions. The religion obligates its believers to seek peace in all aspects of their lives, for the ideal society that the religion seeks to create is not only just, but peaceful.[16]

Peace in the Holy Quran:

There are several verses in the Holy Qur'an which denotes the importance of peace, a few of them are reproduced below:

" Say, 'Peace be upon you!" Your Lord has made Mercy incumbent upon Himself".[17]

" For them is the home of peace and security with their Lord."[18]

" And God calls towards the Abode of Peace." [19]

" By this God guides those who seek His pleasure to the path of peace.'[20]

" Peace [be upon you]! This greeting will be conveyed [to them from the Ever Merciful Lord;"[21]

" Peace be upon you as a reward for your patience."[22]

" So they should worship the Lord of this Sacred House [The Ka'aba], who has fed them in hunger and secured them from fear."[23]

-The servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say words of peace. **.**[24]

-When they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say: For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace be upon you, we seek not the way of ignorance.**.**[25]

-Peace, a word from a Merciful Lord. **.**[26]

-If the enemy inclines to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon Allah. Verily, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing. .[27]

-So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah has not made for you a cause for fighting against them.[28]

Peace in the light of Hadith:

Syyada Aisha (R.A.) reported: Whenever the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, would invoke peace while sitting in prayer, he did not sit but long enough to say:

O Allah, you are Peace and from you is peace. Blessed are you, O Majestic and Generous. .[29]

On one occasion he said"

"You will not enter Paradise until you believe and you will not believe until you love each other. Shall I show you something that, if you did, you would love each other? Spread peace between yourselves."[30]

He also said

"Whoever has three qualities together will have gathered the faith: equity with yourself, offering peace to the world, and spending from small amounts[31]".

-Abn Qayyam reported:

"*The Prophet never forced the religion upon anyone, but rather he only fought those who waged war against him and fought him first. As for those who made peace with him or conducted a truce, then he never fought them and he never compelled them to enter his religion."*[32]

Peace Making and Peace Treaties:

Peacemaking was one of the Prophet's utmost desire throughout his life. He was known as Faithful (*al-Ameen*) even before his Prophet hood. The inhabitants of Makkah allowed him to mediate and arbitrate in many disputes among various tribes. His creative methods of peacemaking and advocating justice were highly praised by believers and nonbelievers. One such example of his arbitration of disputes among the Quraysh tribes was depositing of the Black Stone (*al-Hajar al-Aswad*). This dispute arose over the depositing of the Black Stone of the Ka'aba. Because of frequent floods, the sanctuary of the Ka'aba was in need of repairs. . After much hesitation, the Quraysh leaders decided to undertake its rebuilding in 605 A.D. But when the question of depositing the sacred stone in its old place arose, each of the Quraysh family was eager to have this honor of replacing it. It was quite possible that the Quraysh would fight over this Black Stone issue. But the Holy Prophet's wise intervention saved a bloody situation. Before the Quraysh had actually come to blows, their leaders agreed to seek the arbitration of the man who would enter the sacred precincts first in the morning next day. So they posted men to watch and see who enters the Ka'aba first of all the next day. Now it was the habit of the Holy Prophet to go to the Ka'aba for prayers early in the morning. As he did so they asked him to arbitrate in the Black Stone dispute. With great tact and wisdom, the Prophet placed the sacred Stone in a blanket and asked all the leaders of the Quraysh to lift it to the level where it was to be placed and then he himself deposited it in its place. Thus amid cries of '*al-Amin'* and the applause of the Quraysh, he saved a knotty situation by his wisdom and diplomacy which would have caused much bloodshed in Makkah. .[33]

There are many events in the life history of the Prophet (PBUH), which indicate his desire and strong will for creating a peaceful environment.

After migration to Madinah the Prophet (PBUH) made a treaty with local Jews and non-Muslim Arabs to ensure peace of the land. The treaty is called Covenant of Madinah. This treaty has religious, social and political clauses.

The salient features of the treaty regarding peace keeping are as under:

1: Madinah was declared as sanctuary i.e. a place of peace for its citizens, Muslims and Jews.

2: War and peace was made common. The Jews and the Muslims will mutually help each other if somebody contemplates an invasion of Madinah.

3: The believers would be one community and act in body while making peace. They will unanimously wreak vengeance on anyone who fights against them in the path of God.

4: The Jews and the Muslims will mutually help each other if somebody contemplates an invasion of Madinah.

5: If the Muslims are invited to make peace, the Jews shall also accept the same terms and stick to them. And if the Jews invite the Muslims for a similar purpose, it will be incumbent on the Muslims to behave similarly. The only exception will be in the case of a religious war.

6: If anyone fights with the people of this Covenant, he will be jointly resisted by them, that is, by the Muslims and the Jews. There shall be mutual love and concord amongst them. There shall be fidelity and not faithlessness among them.

7: The pious believers will unanimously rise against anyone who rebels, or who commits fornication, or any offence or tyranny or who attempts to stir up mischief amongst them. They are to make common cause against such a person, even though he be their son.

8: Whether it is Judaism of the Jews or the Faith of the Muslims, both Jews and Muslims are to offer reciprocal respect and tolerance for the two religions. Whosoever is responsible for any aggression or for the breach of any treaty, will make himself and his households responsible for necessary punishment, whether he be a Muslim or a Jew. .[34]

This treaty in the words of Mazhar al-Haq ensured peace and tranquility in the nascent Islamic State of Madinah. He says:" A perusal of the Charter would clearly indicate that it aimed at and brought about a complete transformation in the political, religious and civic life of Madinah. Firstly, it established political unity and transformed the city of warring tribes into a peaceful State or Republic, headed by the Holy Prophet, under the sovereignty of Allah. Secondly, it replaced civil strife and discord by peace and order under a new code of civic laws which the Prophet promulgated. The life and property of every person, Muslim or Jew, were protected by the Prophet and Islam. .[35]

In this context the treaty of Hudaibiyah is also proved a milestone in the Jurisprudential history of Islam as it clearly allows the Muslims to make treaties of peace with non-Muslims. It paved the way for the jurists to lay down rules of Islamic International Law.

The text of the treaty is as follows:

"1: With Thy Name Oh God!

2: This is what was agreed upon between Muhammad, son of Abdullah and Suhail, son of Amr.

3: They both agreed to put down fighting on the part of the people for ten years during which period the people were to enjoy peace and refrain from fighting with each other.

4: And where is whoever of the companions of Muhammad, comes to Makkah on Haj or Umra (pilgrimage), or in quest of bounty of God. (i.e. commerce) en route to Yemen or Taif, such shall be in security regarding his person and property. And whoever comes to Madinah, from among the Quraysh, en route to Syria or Iraq seeking the bounty of God, such shall be in security regarding his person and property.

5: And where is whoever comes to Muhammad from the Quraysh without the permission of his guardian, he (i.e., the Prophet) will hand him over to them; and whoever comes to the Quraysh from amongst those who are with Muhammad, they will not hand him over to him.

6: And that between us is a tied-up breast (i.e., bound to fulfill the terms), and that there shall be no secret help violating the neutrality, and no acting unfaithfully.

7: And that whoever likes to enter the league of Muhammad and his alliance, may enter into it; and whoever likes to enter the league of the Quraysh and their alliance, may enter it.

8: And that thou (Muhammad) shall return from us (Quraysh) in this year and enter not in our midst; and that when it is the coming year, we shall go out from thee and thou shall enter with thy companions and stay there three nights, with thee being the weapons of the rider: having swords at the side, thou shall not enter with what is other than them (sword).

9: And that the animals of sacrifice (brought by thee) will be slaughtered where we found them (i.e., in Hudaibiyah) and thou shall not conduct them to us (in Makkah). .[36]

The treaty of Hudaibiyah proved a clear victory, it led both the Quraysh and the Muslims to interact with each other which helped a lot the first group to watch the Muslim character from near and thus they came closer to Islam . In the words of Dr. Khalid Alavi" Later events confirmed that the treaty of Hudaibiyah was indeed a clear victory, and that it's results were in favour of the Muslim cause. Prior to the treaty there was no social or economic intercourse between Muslims and pagans. However, in the post-treaty era, social and economic contacts between the two groups grew. Family and commercial concerns brought an increasing number of members of the Quraysh to Madinah." Dr. Khalid continues " Because every Muslim of that time was a true model of Islam their courtesy, fairness, righteous conduct and upright character won the hearts of pagans. The religion of Allah thus began to spread quickly. At no time before had such a large number of pagans enter the fold of Islam as compared to the period between the treaty of Hudaibiyah and the victory of Makkah."[37]

Another good example of peace treaties can be found in the life history of the second Caliph Umar. During his reign, when the Muslims conquered the Jerusalem, he signed a historical peace treaty with the Christians. This treaty is

of immense importance as the Muslim Jurists have derived many Islamic Laws in the field of Islamic International Law.

This treaty has religious as well as political importance, therefore it has been narrated by almost all the Traditionalists, Jurists and historian in their works. This treaty says:

"This is the treaty for the people of Aelia, granted by Umar, the servant of God and the Commander of the Faithful. He gives them the guarantee of their lives and properties, their churches and crosses. Your churches will not be transformed into dwelling houses, nor destroyed, nor, will anyone confiscate anything belonging to them. The inhabitants will not be subjected to any compulsion or constraint in matters of religion, nor shall they be in any way molested, Jews shall reside in Aelia with the Christians. The people of Aelia (Jerusalem) shall pay jizya.[38] as people of other towns do. They must also turn out Greeks and robbers. But the Greeks shall have safe-conduct until they reach a place of security. But those Greeks who stay behind shall pay jizya like the rest of the inhabitants. If any of the people of Aelia desire to leave with the Greeks, they too will be granted safe-conduct till they reach a place of security, provided they take their goods, but leave behind their chapels and crosses. The strangers in the town may remain on the same condition of paying the tax, or, if they wish, they may leave also with the Greeks, and return to their own lands. They will have nothing to pay until one harvest shall have been gathered in. Whatever is contained in this treaty is placed under the alliance and protection of God, and of his Apostle (PBUH) and of his successors, and of the faithful, so long as they pay the tax."[39]

Foreign Policy of Islamic State is based on Peace:

The issue of permanent peace with non-Muslim States has been discussed by the Jurists at length in the light of the Quran, the Sunnah and particularly in the light of the treaties made by the Prophet(PBUH) and his four Successors. Some of the jurists like Imam Shafia'i opines that it is allowed subject to the condition that it should not exceed ten years.[40], While according to Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik peace treaty can be made with non-Muslims even for an indefinite period. Tahir Mansoori has quoted the view of a renowned scholar of the contemporary era, Dr. Wahba al-Zuhaily in this regard who is in favour of the last opinion.

"Al-Zuhaily also argues that it is quite permissible to conclude permanent treaties with non-Muslims state. Such treaties, in his opinion, enable dissemination of the message of Islam. They also provide an opportunity to Muslims to approach non-Muslims and convey their message in a friendly atmosphere. Besides, the prevalence of peace and security in the world is *per se* an important objective of the Shariah.

Al- Zuhaily marshals a considerable amount of evidence to establish that the Prophet(PBUH) had entered into permanent treaties with non- Muslims. He, however, emphasizes that the treaty with the non- Muslims should not contain any provision that violates any principle of Islam. He stresses that these treaties

should not be confined to peace treaties only; rather, they may extend to a variety of fields in order to strengthen cooperation between Muslims and the non-Muslims. Such cooperation will guarantee not only economic prosperity and wellbeing of the Muslim Ummah but will also help disseminate the message of Islam in the world."[41]

No doubt all the teachings of Islam are based on the concept of peace, however, it is also a bitter truth that practically peace does not exist in many parts of the world and particularly the whole Muslim world is in turmoil. A detailed study and analysis of the situation is needed to reach the right conclusion. The following discussion will throw some light on the subject.

Factors responsible for disturbing the peace process:

There are several factors which have caused to damage the process of peace building. It can be summarized in the following sub titles:

1: Theology Based Obstacles:

On the one hand Theology has molded lives of the millions of people by giving them, hope, strength and sense of protection, but at the same it is also a fact that theological differences caused violence and bloodshed also. A large number of innocent people have been killed for nothing except than that they were bearer of another faith. In this regard as for as the Islamic teachings are concerned , it has laid down specific rules for each and every walk of life and even clearly enjoined the conduct of war. These rules have been complied under the title of *"al-Siyar"* in the Islamic Jurisprudence. These instructions deal with Jus ad Bellum(Causes of war) as well Jus in Bello(Conduct of war).
Another dimension of these differences are misinterpretation of the religious teachings: It is mainly of two reasons:

(a) Interpretation of Religious Teachings due to the ignorance of true teachings of religion.
(b) Intentionally mutilating and distortion of the teachings for the vested interests.

2: Sectarianism:

One of the major cause of unhealthy attitude towards others, is sectarianism. A large number of people have been suffering from this obnoxious phenomena. Unfortunately teachings of peace are not so common in society as these should be .

3: Education system:

Education for peace can be proved an effective tool for creating a peaceful environment. Although many institutions have already taken steps for the introduction of peace studies in their curricula, but still there is room for improvement It is also essential to critically analyze the current curricula and syllabi in vogue, as it has been reported that it contains such material which causes hatred in the society .

4: Misunderstanding of the West and vice versa:

If the west is located geographically a long distance away from the East , the same is the case with its ways of life, culture, civilization and ways of thinking . Although modern means of communications have brought them closer to each other, still many differences are there between them. In the East there is a considerable number of people influenced by the West without knowing the long history of gradual evolution of the western society, its philosophical bases and causes of its advancement in the field of science and technology. Another group considers the whole West as their enemy, which always, in their opinion conspiring against them. The same is the case in the West as most of the Westerners take the present day East inferior to them, ignoring its glorious past and forward looking future. It is certain that despite many differences, both the East and the West can collaborate and cooperate in many fields for the betterment of humanity.

5: Negative role of the media

Media can play a vital role in creating a peaceful environment, but unfortunately the present day media high-lights only violent events and ignore all those initiatives which are taking place for creating peace and harmony in the society. While on the other hand it also broadcasts violence based programs. All this create a negative impact in the minds of children and youth and as they grow, their attitudes become more negative and aggressive.

6: Political based obstacles.

In the third world most countries have democracy is in its initial stages. Some of the political leaders have low temper and in most cases they instigate their followers for violence. While the spirit of democracy is the creation of tolerance for those who have different or alternate viewpoint.

7:Role of Judiciary:

Rule of law has direct link with peace. Those societies which have an independent and impartial judiciary, the people have a sense of protection, while violence takes place in those societies where the aggrieved party becomes hopeless from attaining the justice, then they take law in their own hands and thus create problem for the whole society.

8: Social problems:

Many social problems cause violence in many cases like rampant corruption, increasing population and conservative thinking etc. Such like problems cause intolerance in the mind of the youth and ultimately they resort to violence.

9: Unemployment:

In third world countries where either social security system does not exist altogether or it is in poor condition. Unemployment causes frustration and despair amongst the unemployed youth which leads to violent behavior and when some gangsters or other non-state actors approach them, they prove an

easy prey for them, because they offer reasonable amount to them in the form of salary, and thus a significant number of them join these unlawful organizations.

10: Cultural differences:

Sometimes cultural differences causes unrest in a heterogeneous society. In such like situation different events are needed to be organized in which different segments of society are invited to take part as this would help a lot for understanding each other in a better way.

11: Differences of Viewpoints:

Although diversity and difference of opinions is a blessing as this paves the way for creation of new ideas, however, in some cases particularly in traditional societies it is considered a rude behavior and thus causes impatience and intolerance in society.

12: Lack of institutions for conflict resolution:

Conflicts free societies can hardly be found in any part of the world ,however, advanced societies have adopted mechanisms for conflicts resolutions. On the other hand the third world countries need to establish institutions who serve the purpose.

13: Weak role of the UN and Security Council:

Peace making initiatives and efforts of the United Nation Organization (UNO) cannot be denied, however, there is still much room for improvement as unrest and violence prevails in almost every part of the world while the role UNO is very poor in this regard.

14: Ethnic differences:

It was the will of Creator to create people bearing different ethnic identities. In fact these are meant for differentiation and recognition, but the modern *Jahilliyah* (Ignorance) treated it as a source of hatred and intolerance. A continuous struggles is needed to overcome this scornful phenomena.

15: Distortion of Historical Facts:

A group of people intentionally present Islamic History in mutilated form. They rely on very weak narrations and thus cause to create misunderstanding about the teachings of Islam which cause irritation and unrest in the world.

16: Domestic Problems:

Sometimes domestic problems cause unrest in the society, as in many cases a person facing problems domestically, becomes short tempered and when he comes out of home, starts quarreling with others.

17: Poverty:

In fact the root cause of all evils lies in poverty. Many people resort to violence because they have meager resources for supporting their families . It is

noteworthy that a society based on social justice has relatively low crime ratio despite poverty

Conclusion:

Although peace is of substantive value but it can be conceived as an enduring state of harmony, trust, and coexistence only when coupled with and supported by justice, because it also means being secure from all that is morally evil and destructive. Thus the Qur'an combines justice with *ihsan* when it commands its followers to act with " justice and good manner" *(bi'l- adl wa'l-ihsan)* .[42]

In fact *adl*,or justice, is the key to establishing harmony and sustainable peace among God's creation; the Qur'anic conception of peace cannot be attained unless a just order is first established. The Qur'anic notion of justice is universal and valid for all human beings, as the following verse indicates:

" O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witness to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do" .[43]

In principle, Islamic justice should transcend any consideration of gender, animosity, race, or creed. Therefore, all Muslims must work to establish justice for all, including social and economic justice….. This notion of justice extends to both men and women, Muslim and non-Muslim, and cannot be achieved without an activity, socially engaged community.[44]

It is noteworthy that Peace initiatives and peace process are generally associated with peaceful settlement of disputes; concern for collective security; disarmament; preventive diplomacy and functionalism. Disputes and disagreements whether political, economic or ideological have been generally settled either through use of might and power or through negotiations, i.e. brain power, mediation, face to face interaction and dialogue. Peace initiatives, therefore, provide a forum for this purpose." .[45]

It a an undeniable fact that the whole world is passing through a very difficult time. There are two kinds of countries, one who live in state of turmoil and in a state war and the other, although, live apparently in peace and tranquility, however, they have a constant fear of attacks. Feelings of insecurity prevails everywhere. This situation needs an academic and scholarly pursuit.

No doubt, there are several academic Institutions who have strong academic linkages with local institutions, but unfortunately these are on very low scale. Meaningful academic linkages are needed to be established and expanded, while on the other hand relevant experts should be sorted out in this regard. It is also essential that there should be more reliance on the opinion of those experts who reside in the conflict areas. As it has been observed that foreign institutions mostly consult and rely on those, whose personal information are based on secondary sources.

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